

The United States Conference of Mayors National League of Cities

September 22, 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
The Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Re: *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking*
ET Docket 03-158
MB Docket 03-159


Dear Ms. Dortch:

On behalf of nation's cities represented by the United States Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities, this letter responds to the request for comment in the above dockets where the Commission proposes to allocate channel 16 in the New York Metropolitan area to public safety wireless communications. We urge the Commission's prompt and favorable action in this rulemaking to ensure that channel 16 remains a vital element in public safety communication in the New York metropolitan area.

The United States Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of the nation's 1183 U.S. cities with populations of 30,000 or more. Each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. The Conference has assumed historically a national leadership role, calling early attention to serious urban problems and pressing successfully for solutions.

The National League of Cities is the oldest and largest national organization representing municipal governments throughout the United States. Its mission is to strengthen and promote cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance. Working in partnership with 49 state municipal leagues, NLC serves as a national resource to and an advocate for the more than 18,000 cities, villages, and towns it represents.

In 1995, the Commission authorized public safety agencies in the New York Metropolitan area to conduct public safety communications over broadcast channel 16 on a temporary basis. In response to a request of the Police Department of the City of New York, and the other participating agencies using channel 16, the Commission has proposed to allocate channel 16 permanently to public safety communications.



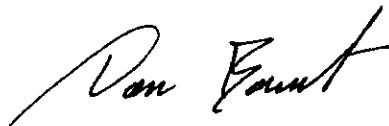
We fully support the Commission's proposal to allocate permanently channel 16 in the New York Metropolitan area to public safety communications. The Commission's proposal recognizes the crucial role effective wireless communications have in assisting police officers and other public safety officials in responding to the citizen facing an emergency. The Commission's initial temporary authorization of channel 16 in the New York Metropolitan area provided the area's public safety agencies the opportunity to pursue a pervasive public safety communications infrastructure that would contribute to modernizing communications in the public sector. The participating agencies accepted this opportunity and in response committed enormous public investment to infrastructure and equipment. With this investment and much work still to be done, the Commission's proposal to allocate channel 16 to public safety communications is an integral part of contributing to enhanced homeland security capability in the New York Metropolitan area. It is crucial that public safety communications on channel 16 be protected from interference and other actions that may impair effective use of the channel.

Because of the number of public safety agencies that depend on channel 16, including those currently committing more investment to it so as to improve public safety communications further, we urge the Commission to act expeditiously in making its proposal a reality. Allocating channel 16 permanently to public safety communications in the New York City metropolitan area will make a tangible and important contribution to the manner by which law enforcement and public safety officers carry out their responsibility to respond to the citizen in need.

Respectfully submitted,



Tom Cochran
Executive Director
The U. S. Conference of Mayors



Donald J. Borut
Executive Director
National League of Cities

Copy provided to:

Mr. W. Kenneth Ferree, Chief Media Bureau

Mr. David Roberts, Senior Attorney, Video Services Division, Media Bureau